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## Viewing cable 07ANKARA1515, TURKEY-EU TROIKA MEETINGS: TURKEY'S EU ACCESSION

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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
<a href="#">07ANKARA1515</a>	2007-06-14 13:27	2011-08-30 01:44	<a href="#">CONFIDENTIAL</a>	Embassy Ankara

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ANKARA 001515

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/13/2017

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SUBJECT: TURKEY-EU TROIKA MEETINGS: TURKEY'S EU ACCESSION  
PROCESS SPUTTERS ONWARD

REF: ANKARA 1454

Classified By: Political Counselor Janice Weiner for reasons 1.4(b) and

(d)

¶11. (C) SUMMARY: Turkey-EU Troika consultations held June 4 in Ankara were constructive and served to underscore the continued mutual commitment to pursuing eventual Turkish EU membership, according to GOT and EU officials. Turkey's membership aspirations continue, and the technical process, though slowed by the EU's December freezing of negotiations on eight chapters as a result of Turkey's refusal to open its ports to Cypriot vessels, is moving ahead as well. The question of how many additional chapters will be opened for formal negotiation later this month remains. However, the negotiation process continues, notwithstanding French President Sarkozy's apparent determination to end it as well as faltering public support in Turkey. END SUMMARY

CONSULTATIONS SHORT BUT SUBSTANTIVE

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¶12. (C) Turkey-EU Troika consultations held June 4 in Ankara were short but substantive, focusing not only on Turkey's membership aspirations, but on broader international topics. According to various EU member state embassy officials here, the meetings lasted only three and a half hours due to German FM Steinmeier's commitments later in the day in Berlin for Germany-Canada consultations. In addition to Steinmeier, the EU delegation was led by EU Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn and Portuguese State Minister Joao Cravinhoas. Turkey's key representatives included FM Abdullah Gul, State Minister and Chief Negotiator on EU Accession Ali Babacan, Foreign Policy Advisor to the PM and FM Ahmet Davutoglu, and MFA Under Secretary Ertugrul Apakan, among others.

TURKEY'S EU ASPIRATIONS

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¶13. (C) Ahmet Dogan of Turkey's Secretariat General for EU Affairs said the EU delegation underscored the Union's continued commitment to the negotiations and reiterated the hope that formal talks on an additional three chapters could be initiated before the end of June. Dogan said the three chapters under consideration, on Economic and Monetary Policy, Financial Controls, and Statistics, have no opening benchmarks which Turkey needs to clear prior to the opening of negotiations. Should the EU decide to move forward as planned in these three areas, Turkey would be asked to submit an opening position paper for each chapter; GOT bureaucrats are busy preparing those.

¶14. (C) In contrast to Dogan's optimism about moving ahead with all three chapters, German Embassy officials here said that Steinmeier offered no such assurances. The German presidency objective is to proceed if possible. They see the process as open, and open-ended; whether or not member states object to opening all three chapters at the moment, the process itself will continue. Steinmeier noted that a large majority of EU countries favor Turkey's candidacy, but it is no secret that some - and at least two in particular (Cyprus, France) - are critical. Steinmeier indicated to his Turkish hosts that Turkey must help turn them around.

Sarkozy and Turkey's EU Accession

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¶15. (C) Reports of French President Sarkozy's determination to offer Turkey status short of full membership, perhaps as early as this December, have received considerable media attention here and contributed to a backlash among the Turkish public against EU membership talks. French embassy officials confirmed press reports that Sarkozy's government intends to try to block opening of negotiations on the Economic and Monetary Policy (EMU) chapter. They pointed out, however, that it may be too late. Dogan noted France and Cyprus view opening negotiations on three new chapters as rewarding continued Turkish intransigence on opening its ports to Cypriot vessels; they are pressing to open just one new chapter. He said the GOT will be disappointed, but not surprised, if in the end the EU offers to open two new

chapters. Ironically, Turkey has a good story to tell on the EMU, as it is already in compliance with two of the Maastricht criteria only six years after its financial crisis. Moreover, a Turkish EU Secretariat official pointed out to us that opening the EMU chapter is purely symbolic in any case, because nothing really happens on this chapter until the Eurozone is ready to admit the accession country,

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after the country gains EU membership. The French officials lamented that French efforts will only worsen soured bilateral relations over the French parliament's passage of an Armenian genocide resolution last Fall.

EU Keeping An Eye on Turkey

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¶6. (C) Turning to domestic politics, FM Gul told the EU delegation that Turkey-EU relations would play a role in the July 22 general elections. Gul expressed hope that the Turkish electorate would decide to re-elect a party committed to continuing the EU negotiation process. Commissioner Rehn underscored the EU's hope that Turkey's election would be in accordance with democratic principles and Turkey's constitution. Gul reiterated the Justice and Development Party (AKP)-led government's commitment to pursuing the reform agenda established earlier in the year in its EU roadmap. He also indicated the next government, presuming AKP is again in power, would take up the process of passing a new Foundations Law and reform of penal code article 301, both of which have been high priorities for the EU. According to Dogan, the EU delegation emphasized the importance the EU gives to Turkey's continued work in enhancing freedom of expression and freedom of religion, as well as trade union rights. The Troika also criticized the military's role in Turkey, pointing to the April 27 "coup-by memorandum" that many believe influenced the constitutional court's decision to negate the presidential election process. At the same time, Dogan said the EU delegation emphasized its support for Turkey's secular democracy, which many Turks would read to mean support for AKP's more secular opposition.

¶7. (C) Steinmeier pointed to the April 18 murders of three Christians in Malatya as a big concern for the EU, which also reflected very negatively for Turkey in the European press. He stressed the need for a change in mentality among Turks toward religious minorities and recommended that GOT ministers meet with leaders of these communities. Steinmeier expressed the EU's continued commitment to Turkey in its fight against PKK terrorism but appealed for GOT restraint and no precipitous action in connection with its struggle against the PKK in northern Iraq. Gul responded that Turkey has no hidden agenda regarding Iraq; it wants a unified Iraq that is friendly, democratic, and stable. However, a lack of sovereignty causes chaos, which breeds terrorism. Gul said the PKK has gained access to weapons and explosives and the ability to freely train its cadres in northern Iraq. Turkey is expecting more urban bombings and the GOT is concerned about how the Turkish public and media will react in the current politically-charged environment.

Searching For a Way Forward on Cyprus

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¶8. (C) On Cyprus, Steinmeier said the German presidency would continue to put forth its best effort on a new trade regulation for direct trade with northern Cyprus and opening ports/airports. State Minister Cravinhoas pledged similar effort on the part of the Portuguese. However, Steinmeier said that even if no progress is made on direct trade, Turkey remains obligated in the EU's eyes to open its ports and airports to ROC trade. The Turks predictably countered with the need to end the isolation of Turkish Cypriots and to find a solution under UN aegis to the continued division of the island. Gul blamed the Cypriot government for obstructionism.

Cooperation on Central Asia

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¶ 9. (C) The Troika and Turkish delegations also discussed Iran's nuclear ambitions, the Middle East Peace Process and intra-Palestinian factional fighting, ongoing fighting in Lebanon, prospects for Turkish-EU cooperation in Central Asia, and efforts to improve ties between Turkey and Armenia.

On Central Asia, Steinmeier described a change in EU strategy, now focused not only on energy but in helping push for positive change in the entire region. The EU wants to enhance EU-Central Asia cooperation on transport routes and civil society dialogue, as well as energy projects like Nabucco. The GOT delegation spoke of the great potential for Turkish-EU cooperation in this region, especially in energy. MFA Deputy U/S Cevikoz described the four "D's" of the Turkish approach: democracy, dialogue, development, and diversification. The Turks recognized that the Central Asian states had for too long been under the thumb of big brother; they were being careful not to appear to be a newer, more modern version of the same. The Portuguese added that

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EU-Central Asia consultations would take place on the margins of UNGA later this year. Cravinhoas also appealed for Turkish pragmatism in its dealings with Armenia, viewing the lack of bilateral ties as an obstacle to greater regional cooperation.

¶ 10. (C) COMMENT: Despite political forces determined to drive Turkey and the EU apart, the process continues to sputter forward. With the AKP government having made EU accession a centerpiece of its program, it is struggling to resist rising anti-EU sentiment in Turkey and a more openly hostile Euroscepticism from the military. Technocrats working outside the glare of the media spotlight remain fully committed to ensuring the process lives on. High profile officials like Olli Rehn continue to warn of the dire consequences for relations between the West and Islam should Turkey's aspirations be extinguished. On the Turkish side, Minister Babacan said the alternative to Turkey's EU avocation is to be a third world country. The July 22 elections will help clarify whether the Turkish public - now slightly favoring membership - sees the EU accession process as an unacceptable national humiliation or a worthwhile effort. In the meantime, planning for future Turkey-EU cooperation will continue.

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